

Russian Imam Arrested in Berlin, Suspected of Recruiting for Islamic State

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Police in Berlin have detained a Muslim cleric from Russia's North Caucasus republic of Dagestan on suspicion of recruiting fighters for the Islamic State (IS) terrorist group, German and Russian media reports said Thursday.

The 30-year-old imam from the Fussilet 33 Islamic center in Berlin's Moabit neighborhood is accused of recruiting IS fighters online and of sending military equipment, such as night vision goggles and telescopes, to Islamist groups in Syria, Germany's Deutsche Welle (DW) reported.

German officials reportedly said they began investigating the imam — identified in the DW report as Murat A., also known as Gadzhimurad K. — after he spoke about his ties with IS during an interview published by Russia's independent news portal Meduza in May.

In its May article, Meduza published remarks by Murad Atayev, identified as “one of the

leading Russian-speaking preachers of Islamic State,” and an imam of a Berlin mosque that had attracted the attention of German law-enforcement agencies as a center for Islamist fighters' recruitment, according to Meduza.

The suspect is a Russian citizen and native of Dagestan, is fluent in Russian and Chechen, and is a prominent figure in Germany's ethnic Chechen community, Russia's RIA Novosti news agency reported, citing prosecutors in Berlin.

Officials at the Russian embassy said the man has not asked them for legal help, RIA Novosti reported.

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